



Advice for Parents — Helping Your Child



Childcare during and after a Disaster

During the disaster and during the recovery period, there are many concerns about child care. Where will children be safe? Who can watch them while parents are busy dealing with disaster-related concerns or assisting with clean-up efforts? Some possibilities for childcare might be churches, clergy/church members, child care facilities, relatives, babysitters or an elderly neighbor. Check for after school or summer school activities that would give the child a meaningful place to be and would free your time for dealing with the crisis. Other ideas include: library programs, foster grandparent agencies, 4-H clubs, church youth groups and child care centers.

General Guidelines for Parents

- Spend more time with your child. Use part of that time to talk.
- Some comfort may be restored through recreating familiar surroundings, e.g., obtaining copies of photos from family and friends and allowing the child to replace lost stuffed animals.
- Children can be expected to have greater difficulty at times of separation (school drop-offs, bedtime) so extra reassurance is important. Let your child know where you are. Daytime phone calls can help reassure your child.
- Monitor your child's viewing of the disaster on television and other media. Repeated viewing of disaster scenes can be traumatic. If possible, watch television with your child and discuss the programs you see.
- Allow the child to discuss the disaster, but do not force it. When discussing it, emphasize that the child is now safe.

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Adapted by UF/IFAS from:
*Stress and Coping With
Disaster: A Handbook
Compiled Following the
Midwest Flood of 1993 for
Extension Professionals*,
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